



TRAVEL, MEALS, HOSPITALITY & CORPORATE EVENTS

<b>Section:</b>	Finance & Administration	<b>Policy No:</b>	3-140
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## 1. POLICY

For the purpose of this policy, the University of Ottawa Heart Institute (UOHI) is referred to as “the Institute”. This policy is to set out the requirements for the Institute to establish expense rules where expenses are reimbursed from public funds. Expense reimbursements will be provided for authorized Business Travel and other expenses incurred because of performing duties for the Institute. Business Travel and other expenses should not exceed the amount allocated in department budget and should always be the most economical choice. This policy covers all disbursements made by for the Institute as defined below.

This Policy applies to all members of the Institute’s Boards of Directors and other appointees, all Staff, consultants, physicians, researchers, volunteers, students, contractors and any other members of the Institute community who may become eligible for reimbursement of expenses by the Institute.

Note: Throughout this policy, individuals and organizations eligible for reimbursement under this policy will be referred to as “Staff”.

The Broader Public Sector Accountability Act, which covers all government funded institutions including the Heart Institute, contains rules and accountability standards on eligible expenses, perquisites, and processes that must be used for the procurement of goods and services. The rules set out in this Act are used as the guiding principles of this policy.

## 2. DEFINITIONS

**Authorization:** The approval of an expense reimbursement and Business Travel claim by the appropriate person with adequate signing authority.

**Business Expense:** Reasonable expenses incurred by Staff, Board members, medical staff, and consultants and contractors, engaged to work at the Institute, while performing their duties.

**Business Travel:** Travel required for Institute business and authorized by the appropriate level of authority.

**Business Travel Expenses:** Includes road, air and rail travel transportation costs, hotel costs, vehicle rental costs, mileage costs, meals and other incidental costs as approved by the Departmental Director or Vice-President and are within the operating budget.

**Consultant:** A person or entity that under an agreement, other than an employment agreement, provides expert or strategic advice and related services for consideration and decision-making.

**Designated Broader Public Sector Organizations:** Hospitals, school boards, colleges, universities, community care access centres, and children's aid societies.

**Hospitality:** The provision of food, beverage, accommodation, transportation and other amenities at the Institute's expense to people who are not engaged to work for designated Broader Public Sector organizations or any of the Ontario government ministries and agencies.

**Local Business Travel:** Travel within Ontario Health (East) region.

**Personal Vehicle:** A vehicle owned, borrowed or rented/leased personally by a member of Staff.

**Receipt:** An original document, or carbon or certified copy, with the details of the expenditure, the amount, the date and indicating proof of payment.

**Staff:** All individuals in any of the following relationships to the Institute: permanent or temporary, full-time, part-time, casual or contract employees, trainees and volunteers, including but not limited to physicians, residents, interns, researchers, students and any other individuals who perform work or supply services at the Institute.

### 3. PROCEDURE

#### 3.1 Authorization

Expenses can only be claimed by the most senior person present. Expenses cannot be claimed by an individual that are incurred by their approver (e.g. an employee cannot submit their Vice President's expenses for reimbursement even if they were at the same event). Approvers must not approve their own expenses.

Hospitality is only provided when the event involves people from outside the Institute. Functions involving only people who work for the Institute or within the Broader Public Sector are not considered hospitality functions.

Approval should be sought before arrangements are made.

Where sponsors or funding agencies (for research accounts) have their own travel expense policies, the policies of these bodies will have precedence. If sponsors or funding agencies do not have travel expense policies or if certain matters are not included in their policies, then the Institute's policy will prevail.

If a situation arises and discretion needs to be exercised, approvers should consider whether the request is:

- able to stand up to scrutiny by the auditors and members of the public;
- properly explained and documented;
- fair and equitable;
- reasonable and appropriate.

Information about expenses claimed by members of the Boards, the CEO, Vice Presidents and Senior Management will be posted on the Institute's website at [www.ottawaheart.ca](http://www.ottawaheart.ca).

#### 3.2 Out-of-Country Health Benefits

Before travelling, Staff should contact Human Resources to determine their current benefit coverage. If Staff is not covered through regular Institute benefits, insurance should be purchased through the Institute's appointed travel agency.

#### 3.3 Travel Agency

Non-local travel should be booked through the Institute's appointed travel agency (Appendix A) unless a lower rate can be found. Staff must ensure that UOHI's travel agency is aware of all special rates found (conference or discount rate).

The Institute will not reimburse Business Travel Expenses incurred through other travel agencies unless written confirmation is received from the Institute's appointed travel agency that the rate is more economical than booking through Institute's appointed travel agency.

#### 3.4 Travel and Transportation

Where a number of Staff are attending the same function, shared travel should be considered and required where possible.

All travel must be approved prior to making any arrangements using the Travel Request Form. Where the travel will be reimbursed by an external agency and/or where the external agency is making the arrangements, no prior approvals from the Institute are required. For all international travel expected to exceed \$5,000, in addition to the initial review and approval of the proposed travel by the appropriate VP or Division Head, the travel costs and rationale must be approved by the CEO or the CFO before arrangements are made.

The mode of transportation chosen – air, train, or car – should be that which enables Staff to attend Institute business with the least cost to the Institute, consistent with the least amount of interruption to Staff's regular business and personal schedules. Consideration should be taken as to the length of time away from the workplace.

Travel with others (e.g. spouse), including meals and cancellation fees, are not covered and must be paid for by Staff.

When personal travel is combined with Business Travel, Staff will be reimbursed for only the business portion of the trip at the lowest available fare. Personal travel does not include travelling to or from home when travelling for business (i.e. travelling to and from the airport).

**i. Travel by Vehicle** - When road transportation is the most practical and economical way to travel, the order of preference should be:

- (i) rental vehicle when a rental vehicle is more economical than use of a personal vehicle; or
- (ii) personal vehicle when a personal vehicle is more economical than use of a rental vehicle.

- **Rental Vehicles** - Rental of a compact or mid-sized vehicle is encouraged. Consideration may be given for a car rental upgrade based on the number of passengers, weather conditions and other safety reasons. However, all luxury and sports car rentals are prohibited.

- **Collision and Liability Insurance** - For short-term rentals (less than one month) in Canada and in the US only, liability insurance should be purchased from the car rental company. No supplementary collision insurance is necessary since this is covered under the Institute's insurance policy.

- **Personal Vehicles** - Personal Vehicles used on Institute business must be insured at the vehicle owner's expense for personal motor vehicle liability. Coverage should be equal to or greater than the minimum liability specified in the Insurance Act. Drivers must satisfy themselves whether their motor vehicle insurance coverage should include business use of their vehicles. The Institute will not reimburse costs of collision and liability coverage.

The Institute assumes no financial responsibility for privately owned vehicles other than paying the kilometric rate when used for Institute business. Those driving a personal vehicle on Institute business cannot make claims to the Institute for damages due to a collision.

Staff using Personal Vehicles for Institute business will be reimbursed in accordance with the approved kilometer allowance, outlined in Appendix A. (This excludes travel between UOHI & TOH Campuses during operating hours of the inter-campus shuttle bus.)

This allowance covers the costs of fuel, depreciation, maintenance and insurance related to using a Personal Vehicle for Institute business.

Receipts for parking lot charges and applicable bridge or highway tolls can be submitted for reimbursement.

**ii. Travel by Train** - Staff are expected to choose the most economical and direct form of transportation by train. Every effort should be made to book in advance to ensure availability of economy class seats and to obtain the lowest fares.

**iii. Travel by Air** - Staff may travel by air for trips that are beyond reasonable driving distance. Prior approval for all travel by air must be obtained and documented in writing. All transportation **economy/coach** fare<sup>1</sup>. Staff will obtain maximum savings on air travel expenses within reasonable limits. Every effort should be made to book in advance to take advantage of discounted fares and to obtain the lowest fares.

**iv. Taxis** - Reimbursable where reasonable and must include original receipts.

### **3.5 Accommodation Costs, Incidentals**

The Institute will reimburse **standard quality hotel** room expenses. Staff are responsible for all room charges and must review the hotel bill carefully to ensure all charges are correct. A detailed copy of the hotel bill **must** be submitted with the expense claim.

Incidental expenses such as laundry/dry cleaning service, special facility charges (e.g. fitness clubs) toiletries and in-room videos will not be reimbursed.

An allowance will be provided when accommodation is obtained from a relative or friend, see Appendix A.

### **3.6 Long Distance Business and Personal Calls**

Discretion will be used in the frequency and length. Reimbursement will be made for reasonable costs for necessary personal calls home for each night away. Wherever possible, the most cost-effective method should be used (e.g. Institute-issued cell phones) to minimize costs, including the purchase of cell phone roaming plans ahead of the planned travel.

### **3.7 Office Equipment Business Expenses**

While travelling on Institute business, additional business expenses not otherwise covered will be reimbursed, such as computer access charges, photocopying, word processing services, facsimile transmissions, internet connections, rental and transportation of necessary office equipment, provided that the charges incurred are reasonable and related to Institute expenses.

If it is determined a Staff's personal cell phone is required to be used to facilitate Institute business, facilitate contact with the Staff in the event of an emergency or if the nature of the Staff's work requires that they be available when travelling, the Institute will reimburse incremental cell phone charges. Personal charges or normal monthly charges will not be reimbursed.

The Institute expects discretion to be applied with any expenses incurred and reserves the right to limit reimbursement to reasonable costs.

### **3.8 Meals While Travelling**

The Institute will reimburse reasonable and actual meal expenses, subject to approval by the claimant's Manager/Supervisor. Original, or electronic scanned copy itemized receipts (credit/debit card slips are not sufficient) must be provided with the claim. For meals on hotel bills itemized receipts for the meals must be provided – the hotel bill alone is not sufficient. Hotels can provide this information upon request. Reimbursement for meal expenses incurred is subject to the maximum rate set out in Appendix A.

- i. Business Travel Where Meals are Included** - No reimbursement shall be made for meals consumed at home prior to departure or on return, or for meals included in the cost of transportation, accommodation, seminars and/or conferences.
- ii. Multiple Staff Attending One Event** - Where a number of employees are at an Institute event (e.g. conference) and one employee pays for the whole group, it must be the most senior (Manager, Director, Vice-President) employee in the group. This person is then responsible for submitting the receipt for reimbursement according to Institute policy, including listing who was in the group for whom the expense was

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<sup>1</sup> Flights may be upgraded from economy to business class with the individual paying for the difference in cost. In certain circumstances (seat sales) economy may not be the least expensive option. Proof must be provided to support the claim, and it must be approved by the CEO or CFO for reimbursement. Upgraded seats for travelers with disabilities must be approved by CEO or CFO in advance of booking travel.

incurred. However, in the alternative, employees may submit their own receipts for reimbursement of their own expenses and the senior employee is not required to pay for the group in that event.

**iii. Alcoholic Beverages** - Costs incurred for alcoholic beverages are not reimbursable and Staff are expected to request a separate invoice for any alcoholic beverages consumed with their meals.

### **3.9 Business Meals and Other Expenses**

The Institute will reimburse reasonable meal expenses resulting from business meetings with people who are not engaged in working for Designated Broader Public Sector Organizations. It is recommended that business meetings should be first considered on Institute premises rather than at restaurants.

The Institute will not reimburse **business meal** expenses when the only participants are employees of the Institute or Designated Broader Public Sector Organizations. The Institute will reimburse employees for business meals when volunteers and Board of Directors are included, or if meals are provided as part of an education event taking place over a normal meal period.

#### **i. Alcoholic Beverages**

The Institute will not reimburse the cost of alcoholic beverages at business meetings without prior approval from the CEO or CFO.

### **3.10 Hospitality**

Hospitality should be extended in an economical, consistent and appropriate way when it will facilitate Institute business or is considered desirable as a matter of courtesy.

Where hospitality events are extended by the Institute, and where the guests include vendors (current or prospective), Staff are responsible for obtaining prior VP and CFO approval to ensure that the event does not give, or is not perceived to give, preferential treatment to any vendor.

Hospitality may be extended on behalf of the Institute on the following occasions:

- When discussions on official matters are held with people who are not Institute Staff, including interviews with persons who are being considered for recruitment, members of industry, public interest groups, seminars, or during special events such as public openings;
- When persons visiting Canada as members of universities, national or international organizations are involved in activities relating to those of the Institute;
- When the Institute sponsors formal conferences, and other universities or external bodies are represented;
- When a person who is not an Institute employee renders a service without remuneration;
- When a prestigious ceremony (e.g. sod-breaking, laying of a cornerstone, inauguration or opening) takes place, attended by dignitaries and guests; and
- When other special events are held to enhance the Institute's public image, as approved by the CEO.

**i. Consultants and Contractors** – In no circumstances can hospitality, incidental or food expenses be considered allowable expenses for consultants and contractors. Consultants and contractors will not be reimbursed for such expenses including dependent care, home management, laundry and dry cleaning, meals, snacks and beverages, personal phone calls, tips, pourboires, gratuities, valet service.

The Institute will not reimburse the cost of alcoholic beverages at any Institute event without the approval of the CEO or CFO. In circumstances where alcohol is approved, appropriate measures are to be taken to ensure a reasonable limit is placed on the quantity and cost of alcohol.

### 3.11 Corporate Events

Events must be located on hospital premises unless limited by room size. Events held off premises must have the CEO or CFO approval. The Institute will decide annually in the operating plan as approved by the Board, the number, timing and budget for Corporate Events. This amount may be based on a per staff member amount and shall be reasonable in the circumstances.

If, in addition to the annual Corporate Events, individual departments and/or units/teams wish to hold their own events during the year for their Staff, the costs **will not be reimbursed and must** be covered by Staff. These activities should take place during a time so as not to disrupt regular operations of the Institute.

To the extent possible (space permitting) all internal Corporate Events **must** be held on site and use UOHI catering (Tickers) to provide refreshments.

Recognition events, such as service milestones and retirement events, should be designed to recognize, reinforce and promote positive behaviours. Corporate Events in this regard should be coordinated with Human Resources and Communications.

Alcoholic beverages served at any Corporate Event must be pre-approved by the President and CEO or CFO.

### 3.12 Consultants and Other Contractors

Consultants and other contractors are not considered staff and therefore are not covered by the Institute's business expense policies.

Consultants and other contractors will seek reimbursement only for expenses explicitly agreed to in the detailed contract.

### 3.13 Approval and Reimbursement of Expenses

Staff will submit an expense claim using iExpense (TOH-paid staff) or a cheque request (all other staff) with attached electronic scanned copies of all full-detailed receipts and then obtaining the appropriate electronic authorization/approval.

For expense claims that are processed by The Ottawa Hospital (TOH), TOH is required by legislation to ensure that all expense claims are supported by adequate documentation. All staff submitting and all approvers approving expense reports must comply with this legislation and ensure that all electronically scanned receipts are attached to expense claims.

Claims must be submitted within sixty (60) days of the date the expense was incurred.

- i. **Personal Expense** – Certain personal expenses will not be reimbursed, Such expenses include but are not limited to expenses for any cannabis-related products, credit card fees and late payment charges, expenses incurred due to the presence of friends or family members, unless part of hospitality, hotel expenses incurred because of failure to cancel reservations, personal items not required to conduct Institute business, protective cases/covers for cell phones, iPads or computers, recreational purposes (e.g. video rentals, mini-bars, special facilities charges, entertainment not directly related to Institute business, etc.), or traffic and parking violations incurred while driving for Institute-related business or unlawful conduct.

## 4. RELATED POLICIES AND/OR LEGISLATIONS

- [Broader Public Sector Accountability Act](#)

## APPENDIX A

a) **UOHI Travel Agency** – to book travel corporately

Worldwide Travel One  
samantha@worldwidetravelone.com /1-800- 577-2824

The [UOHI Corporate Travel Request Form](#) is available on Institute's Heart Hub

b) **Personal Automobile Allowance**

Effective June 7, 2026, the mileage reimbursement rate is \$0.63 per km. This rate should also be used for refund of callback/travel for unionized employees to a maximum of \$25.20 one way.

c) **Meal Allowance (including gratuities)**

Equivalent to a maximum of \$90.00 Canadian per day. The same amount will prevail after the conversion of the currency when traveling outside Canada.

d) **Accommodation from a relative or friend**

Per day	\$25.00
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